

Iowa Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

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Iowa's Long Term Care Ombudsman's Office Announces October is Residents' Rights Month and Reminds Long-Term Care Residents of Their Right to Vote

2012 National Resident's Rights Month Theme: My Voice, My Vote, My Right

(Des Moines, IA) The month of October is a time to honor and reflect on the individual rights of residents in nursing facilities, assisted living and other long-term care settings. Resident's Rights Month allows us a specific opportunity to focus on rights and to increase awareness of the rights of individuals residing in long-term care settings.

Resident's Rights are guaranteed by the federal Nursing Home Reform Law and Iowa law. The law requires long-term care facilities to promote and protect the rights of each resident and places a strong emphasis on individual dignity and self-determination. A person living in a long-term care facility maintains the same rights as an individual in the larger community.

Under federal and state law, Residents have the following rights:

1. The Right to Be Fully Informed
2. The Right to Complain
3. The Right to Participate in One's Own Care
4. The Right to Privacy and Confidentiality
5. The Right to Due Process during Transfers and Discharges
6. The Right to Dignity, Respect, and Freedom
7. The Right to Visit
8. The Right to Make Independent Choices

In addition, residents maintain their rights guaranteed under the constitution. One of those rights is the right to vote. With the elections nearing it is a good reminder that every adult citizen may vote unless that person has been either 1. Declared mentally incompetent to vote; or 2. Convicted of an infamous crime.

"One of the basic rights we have in this country is the right to vote. Residents in long-term care facilities should be encouraged to exercise that right and participate in the process if they are able and so choose," stated Iowa's Long-Term Care Ombudsman Deanna Clingan-Fischer. "If a resident believes that his/her rights are being violated, I would encourage a call to our office. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office serves as an advocate for residents and works to ensure that their rights are understood and carried out. To find out more about resident rights and how Iowans who reside in long-term care facilities can be helped to maintain their dignity and autonomy, contact the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office at: www.iowaaging.gov or call toll-free: 866/236-1430.

"Residents' Rights Month is an excellent opportunity to re-affirm our commitment to residents' rights and to honor and advocate for all of Iowa's long-term care residents," Iowa Long-Term Care Ombudsman Clingan-Fischer concluded.